

Why Bible?

Week 2 | Bible in 39

BOTTOM LINE

God's story of redemption for mankind is captured in the journals of the Old Testament.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

We will walk through all 39 books of the Old Testament with an overview of God's story of redemption of mankind. This journey starts with the creation and fall of man in the book of Genesis and concludes with 400 years of silence after the book of Malachi and the wait for the promised Messiah in the New Testament.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you are a reader, describe the last book you really enjoyed. What was it about the book that pulled you in and kept you engaged?
2. The Old Testament is not written chronologically, but rather it flows like a story. It is comprised of 39 books written by 28 authors over 2,000 years. Are you surprised that the Old Testament could be a flowing story given these details? Why or why not?
3. The story of the Old Testament can be broken down into 10 images. Read through each one and share what comes to mind. Whether or not you've studied the Old Testament in the past consider that the New Testament has its foundation in the Old Testament, yet most evangelical churches teach from the New Testament. It is very important to understand the Old Testament.
 - a. **Apple** – The beginning starts with the creation and fall of man. God made us, gave us a choice, we failed, and His journey to redeem all of us begins.
 - b. **Father Abraham Had Many Sons** – God uses these men to father an amazing group even though they are sinners. God uses us as well when we say yes to Him.
 - c. **Broken Chains** – God uses Moses to lead Israel to freedom. He gives Moses the 10 Commandments. Today we might think God's laws are restrictive, yet if we live by these laws we find life.
 - d. **Real Estate Contract** – God brings Israel to the Promised Land, but they wander for 40 years because they do not obey God's instruction. Partial obedience is still disobedience.
 - e. **Kings** – God gives his people a king to fulfill their repeated request, but earthly kings can be tempted and make bad decisions. God never leads us into temptation. How we handle and negotiate temptation will determine the course of our life and legacy.
 - f. **Crown Split** – Mass disobedience to God's commandments leads to division within the country of Israel. When we seek a king other than God, we live divided lives.
 - g. **Eviction** – The prophets were the mouthpiece of God. Persia captures God's people but allows some back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls. God is our master builder and healer no matter the circumstances.
 - h. **U Turn** – The people return to Jerusalem for a time of rebuilding and renovating. When we are not living for God, we are living under a curse.
 - i. **God's Phone Is On Silent** – God is silent for 400 years. This silence is the time between the Old Testament prophets and the arrival of Jesus in the New Testament. However, God is never "silent", He is always active, involved and working to accomplish His will in our world.
4. The Bible is like a love letter from God. Read through the words on the following page. God reveals His character in every book of the Old Testament. What is God saying to you through this His story?

"Reading the Bible generates life. It produces change. It heals hurts. It builds character. It transforms circumstances. It imparts joy. It overcomes adversity. It defeats temptation. It infuses hope. It releases power. It cleanses the mind."
-Rick Warren



TRY THIS

The Bible Project (thebibleproject.com) is where visual storytelling meets the Bible. Watch two videos that explore the origins, context, and purpose of the Bible: Episode 1 "What Is the Bible?" (thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/) introduces you to a condensed history of how the Bible came into existence, and the different forms of the Bible in the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christian traditions. Episode 2 "How To Read the Bible" (thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/) summarizes the overall story of the Bible as a series of crossroad decisions.

God in the Old Testament

Wherever you look in the Old Testament you see God.

GENESIS	He is our CREATOR
EXODUS	He is our DELIVERER
LEVITICUS	He is our HIGH PRIEST
NUMBERS	He is our PRESENCE
DEUTERONOMY	He is our PROMISE KEEPER
JOSHUA	He is our CONQUERER
JUDGES	He is our WAY
RUTH	He is our REDEEMER
1 and 2 SAMUEL	He is our PROPHET
1 and 2 KINGS	He is our KING
1 and 2 CHRONICLES	He is still our REIGNING KING
EZRA	He is our LAW GIVER
NEHEMIAH	He is our BUILDER
ESTHER	He is our SAVIOR
JOB	He is our HEALER
PSALMS	He is our WORSHIP
PROVERBS	He is our WISDOM
ECCLESIASTES	He is our LIFE
SONG OF SONGS	He is our LOVER OF OUR SOUL
ISAIAH	He is our PRINCE OF PEACE
JEREMIAH	He is our LIVING WATER
LAMENTATIONS	He is our COMFORTER
EZEKIEL	He is our ONLY HOPE
DANIEL	He is the MAN IN THE FIRE WITH US
HOSEA	He is our FAITHFUL SPOUSE
JOEL	He is our DREAM GIVER
AMOS	He is our DEFENDER
OBADIAH	He is our PROTECTOR
JONAH	He is our UNIFIER
MICAH	He is our MESSIAH
NAHUM	He is our WAY THROUGH
HABAKKUK	He is our EVANGELIST
ZEPHANIAH	He is our TRUE GOD
HAGGAI	He is our RENEWER
ZECHARIAH	He is our RESTORER
MALACHI	He is our FATHER

Why Bible?

Week 1 | Change Is Coming

BOTTOM LINE

God desires to change us and He often does that through His Word.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

The true purpose of reading and studying the Bible is for life change. The question is not how many times you have gone through the Bible, but how many times the Bible has gone through you. God desires to transform our lives and He does that through the Living Word (Jesus) and the Written Word (Scripture).

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, and Hebrews 4:12

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share:** Who do you know that is a complete skeptic? Share who comes to mind and their impact on you.
- David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, outlines the most significant trends from a six year study done from 2011-2016. First and foremost, "increased skepticism." People have questions about the origins, relevance and authority of Scripture, and the steady rise of skepticism is creating an unfriendly cultural atmosphere. In a society that respects science and rationalism, it is increasingly difficult to accept that an eclectic assortment of ancient stories, poems, sermons, prophecies, and letters written over the course of 3,000 years is the sacred "Word of God".
 - In 2011 10% of Americans qualified as skeptics of the Bible. In 2016, that number had more than doubled. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
 - Many Americans think the Bible is actually harmful and that people who live by its principles are religious extremists. What barriers does this posture create for those that believe the Bible is truth?
- Kensington was founded on the strong belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe "The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) is the Word of God, written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down exactly what God wanted to communicate to us." **Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 and Discuss:**
 - Paul uses the words "God breathed" to state that the words of our Bible originated with God Himself. They were written down by authors, but in a supernatural action, these words are from the very mouth of God. Does hearing that the words of Scripture are the words of God give you confidence or fuel skepticism? Why?
 - Compare 2 Timothy 3:16 to 2 Peter 1:21. What role does the Holy Spirit play in both the original writing of Scripture and our study of it today?
- Skeptics say that the Bible isn't reliable compared to the original documents. However, there are several methods used to test the reliability of the ancient literature. The amazing thing about the Bible is that it is one unfolding story line, even though it was written by several authors. **Read Hebrews 4:12 and Discuss:**
 - The Bible is God's pursuit of mankind. God wants us to use His Word to change us. The purpose of God's Word is the transformation of our hearts and ultimately our lives. How is God currently pursuing you?
 - If God uses His Word to preserve our faith and equip us for action, then it is essential for each one of us. Why, then, would we ever neglect reading Scripture?

TRY THIS

The Bible is not a dead, archaic book that does not relate to modern life.

The Bible is alive with truths to transform your life.

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The Bible contains the overall story of God and His pursuit of mankind. There is a flow from beginning to end. The Bible reveals the plan of God to restore and redeem us back to His original creation intent for us. From God's creation intent for us, to our rebellion, to His redemption and forgiveness through Jesus, to our future glorious eternity, the Bible unveils the mystery of our purpose. What did God reveal to you through this group discussion? Pray about the confusion and doubts you may feel. Write down in your journal what you hear God respond.